



Growing Healthy Food, People
and Communities

Healthy Garden Workshop Series

September 25, 2009

Fall Maintenance: Preparing Your Garden for Next Season

Prepare Your Soil

- Testing your soil is the first step to having a healthy garden next season. Your local Extension office can assist you in this process and recommend improvements based on the results.
- Spread compost, shredded leaves or other mulch on the garden plot to improve the soil and prevent nutrient-rich topsoil from running off during rainy weather.
- Consider starting new compost bins with leaves and grass clippings from fall clean up. This will provide time for the leaves and grass clipping to break down over winter.

Prepare Your Garden Plot

- Remove dead plants from garden plot. Dead material will harbor disease or pests if left in the garden plot over winter. Place diseased plants in the yard waste pick up. Other dead plants can go in the compost pile or tilled under in the garden plot.
- Consider growing a cover crop such as winter wheat, winter rye, hairy vetch or oats which covers the garden surface over winter to reduce soil runoff. Cover crops can be planted through October.
- Identify location(s) to create and/or expand planting beds for next season. Turn over the grass or try processes such as lasagna gardening to get the ground ready for spring planting. Lasagna gardening, also called "layer composting," involves layering different compostable materials on the soil which naturally break down over winter to create a nutrient-rich garden bed for the spring season.

Evaluate Your Garden Successes and Failures

- What did you and your family enjoy about the garden this year?
- What would you and your family like to change for next year?
- What additional vegetables would you like to grow?
- Which vegetables produced well? Which vegetables did not do as well as expected?
- Think about how you will rotate vegetable locations in the garden next year. Changing the location in the garden where vegetables are planted will reduce disease and pest in the soil. Plan vegetable rotation for the garden to insure the same vegetable are not in same location for the next year.

For further information please contact your local Extension office:

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/>



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